1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

arrived at this plantation to look for work. Led by their chiefs, they had made the long journey from the region of their homes. The chiefs, some of whom had met us in the Chaco, whilst others had only heard of us, wished to pay us a call. Personally I do not possess any notes about this reception, but I have come across some in Fries' diary. He thus refers to the incident: »When the Choroti Indians, whom we knew from Tatarenda and who were now working here, saw us, they came, almost to a man, and greeted us, being evidently very glad to meet us again. *The principal chief, at the head of all the lesser caziques*, was among those who came and paid us their respects.»[1]

A favoured position in the village community is that held by the medicine men; for their services they are rewarded by a — from a Choroti point of view — generous remuneration in the form of food and drink. That among the Choroti the medicine men are held in great esteem, and that everybody is anxious to be on good terms with them, appears only natural to anyone with a knowledge of what an important part magical conceptions play with these Indians. It is largely by the Finlander explorer, Rafael Karsten — oft-quoted in the present work — that ethnological science has been enriched by information and detailed reports on the magical customs and practices of the Choroti, as well as of other Chaco tribes.[2]

The Choroti Indians believe that man, all his life through, is more or less subject to influences from spirits, who, on the whole, are of a harmful nature. Especial danger is to be apprehended from spirits on certain occasions such as child-birth, pubescence and death. Usually the evil is worked by a spirit, »mohsek», entering a person through one of the orifices of his body and thereby assuming possession of him. If at birth a child is deformed or very sickly, it is supposed to be possessed by some evil »moshek», and is on that account killed.[3] When a girl has attained the age of puberty, during the first critical, time she must keep a covering over her head, so that no evil spirit may be able to enter her body by way of her nose, mouth, eyes or ears.[4] The occasion of a girl attaining puberty is celebrated with a dance which undoubtedly is of a magical character.

[1] Professor Robert Fries: diary, X, p. 14. Italics by von Rosen.
[2] See Bibliography attached.
[3] Karsten (1), p. 176.
[4] Karsten (1), p. 165.